

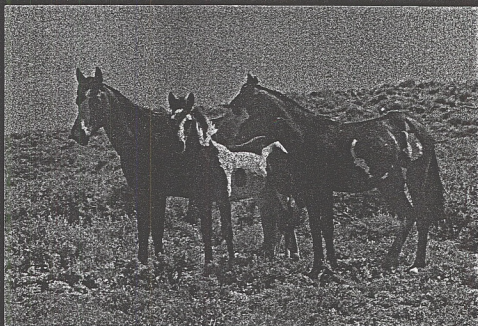
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STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MANAGEMENT OF WILD HORSES AND BURROS ON PUBLIC LANDS



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT June 1992



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STATEMENT FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is my sincere pleasure to present to you the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Strategic Plan for the Management of Wild Horses and Burros on Public Lands.

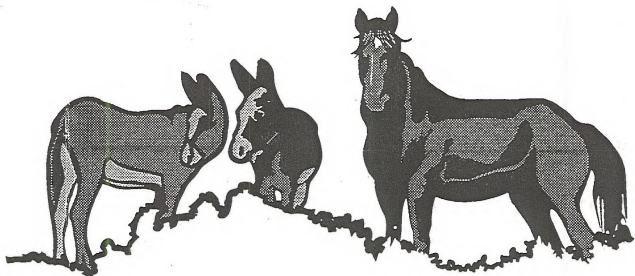
As BLM's Director for three years now, I have been proud to help chart the course of the BLM into the 1990's. The "new" BLM is continuing to have a more balanced multiple-use program of natural resource use and conservation, taking into account the long-term needs of future generations. We are diligently working to meet the rapidly changing public land needs of the American people.

An integral part of the "new" BLM is to develop and implement a long range strategy for the management of America's Wild Horses and Burros -- our living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West. It was our goal to develop a plan which addresses wild free-roaming horses and burros as important and perpetual components of the rangeland ecosystem. I believe we have achieved that goal.


Director6-4-92
Date

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STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MANAGEMENT OF WILD HORSES AND BURROS ON PUBLIC LANDS



MISSION STATEMENT

To affirm wild free-roaming horses and burros are a living legacy of our American heritage, ensuring that they are recognized and maintained as a part of the natural ecosystem, and are valued for their biological, social and cultural attributes.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1:

Perpetuate and protect viable wild horse and burro (WH&B) populations and their habitat in accordance with the principles of multiple-use management.

Objectives:

- A. Increase program emphasis towards management of WH&Bs on the land.
 - (1) habitat
 - (2) census
 - (3) monitoring
 - (4) herd management plans
- B. Establish initial Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) for all herd areas by 1995
- C. Adjust population levels to reach AMLs within six years.
- D. Eliminate illegal activities on the range that cause losses in WH & B numbers.

Goal 2:

Ensure humane care and treatment of excess WH&Bs, including a national adoption program.

Objectives:

- A. Implement actions necessary to reduce stress to WH&Bs during gathering, handling, processing, shipping and adoption.**
- B. Respond to 100 percent of mistreatment complaints with inspections of all affected WH&Bs.**
- C. By end of fiscal year 1993, provide educational materials on humane care of WH&Bs for all adopters during screening.**
- D. Inspect a minimum of 5 percent of untitled WH&Bs following adoption through MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding) with appropriate organizations and with BLM personnel.**
- E. Correct all deficiencies identified through program evaluations or through other sources within 30 days of discovery.**
- F. Increase cooperative efforts with humane and other interest groups to conduct compliance checks.**

Goal 3:

Establish and maintain partnerships and cooperative relationships to benefit WH&Bs.

Objectives:

- A. Enter into agreements with appropriate groups and individuals to:**
 - (1) inspect facilities**
 - (2) conduct compliance on adopted animals**
 - (3) promote or host adoptions**
 - (4) develop multi-media public information.**
 - (5) Participate in WH&B habitat improvement projects and monitoring.**
 - (6) Gather and care for animals**
- B. Interagency Cooperation**
 - Develop Memorandum of Understanding with state and other federal agencies including the US Forest Service and National Park Service to coordinate and define responsibilities for specific herd areas and associated activities to properly manage wild horses and burros.**

Goal 4:

Increase and maintain WH&B professional capability, leadership and service ethic within the Bureau of Land Management, and credibility with the public.

Objectives:

- A. Increase program and budget emphasis on habitat and animal management.**
- B. Develop a technical and professional job series for WH&B personnel to present to the Office of Personnel Management by the end of fiscal year 1993.**

- C. Develop appropriate training courses for WH&B personnel by the end of fiscal year 1993.
- D. Increase management participation and support in WH&B activities.

Goal 5:

Integrate and incorporate research, science, and technical development into the overall WH&B program.

Objectives:

- A. Determine research needs. Begin by initiating research in the following areas:
 - (1) habitat requirements
 - (2) census methods
 - (3) physiology and health including stress thresholds
 - (4) adopter profiles/market
 - (5) effects of fertility control
 - (6) population dynamics
- B. Facilitate practical application of research results.
- C. Establish a WH&B research coordination center.

ASSUMPTIONS

- A. No change will be made in the WH&B Act.
- B. Regulations and policies can be changed.
- C. Adoption will be the primary placement tool of excess animals removed from public lands.
- D. There will be no destruction of healthy animals.
- E. Only adoptable animals will be removed from public lands.
- F. The prison system/sanctuaries are not long-term solutions.
- G. Fertility control will be an available management tool beginning in FY94.
- H. Nationwide, WH&B population is estimated at 55,000. About 37,000 are in Nevada. (Appendix 1)

PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

- A. Increase emphasis on habitat management
 - 1. Establish requirements for habitat analysis and monitoring considering the natural behavior and biological needs for WH&Bs. Consider relationships with other components of the ecosystem. Include the following:
 - a. Ecosystem inventories to identify potential and establish a baseline for monitoring.
 - b. Vegetative monitoring techniques, to determine condition and trend, utilization levels, dietary overlaps with other animals and seasonal use areas. The monitoring program should be complementary to moni-

toring programs for wildlife and livestock. Duplication between programs will be eliminated.

- c. Herd census techniques that are specific to each herd management area, capable of determining population numbers, reproductive rates, area of use and seasonal distribution patterns.
2. Determine through the resource management planning process what the appropriate mix of competing forage consumers will be.
 - a. Develop criteria to establish initial AMLs through the land use plan process. Consider existing inventory and monitoring data and resource conflicts in the development of reasonable alternatives to be analyzed and proposed in the RMP. One or more of the alternatives must have the objective of arriving at a natural thriving ecological balance.
 - b. Review existing manuals, policy and regulations to determine if changes are required to maintain herd integrity and stability while assessing long-term impacts to the rangeland ecosystem.
3. Develop consistent standards for preparation of herd management plans, capture plans and associated environmental analysis.
4. Establish procedures for periodic evaluation of monitoring data to validate or adjust the initial AML established through the land use plan. Coordinate evaluations with other competing resource values.

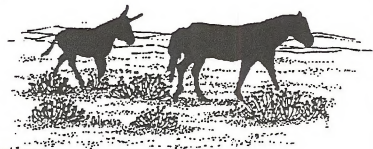
B. Establish a National Wild Horse and Burro Center which will include the following:

1. Research and Development

- a. Establish a focal point for research coordination for enhancement of WH&B management.
- b. Provide facilities for on-the-site research at the center.
- c. Maintain a research library dedicated to WH&Bs.
- d. Obtain field input into identification of research needs.
- e. Research should be conducted on the following:
 - (1) habitat requirements
 - (2) census methods
 - (3) physiology and health including stress- related effects
 - (4) adopter profiles/market
 - (5) effects of fertility control
 - (6) population dynamics
 - (7) other

2. Interpretive Center for Visitors

- a. Develop information and displays covering all aspects of the WH&B program.
- b. Develop video program for selecting,



- training and handling of WH&Bs.
 - c. Provide information on the adoption program.
 - d. Provide for tours through the facility.
 - e. Provide viewing area for WH&Bs in their natural habitat.
 - f. Involve volunteers for visitor management.
3. Science and Technology Transfer
- a. Develop an information and training center to increase knowledge of WH&B specialists.
 - b. Establish a centralized location which provides a forum for national conferences, workshops, meetings and symposiums on WH&Bs.
 - c. Provide program orientation and management training for selected employees.
 - d. Involve specific interest groups, universities and other agencies in technical transfer of new knowledge and techniques.
4. Senior technical staff for national support.
- a. Establish at the national WH&B center a senior technical staff for development of procedures, and to facilitate national coordination for the WH&B program.
 - b. Develop and establish a technical and professional job series for all WH&B personnel.
5. WH&B adoption processing and holding facility.
- a. Provide state-of-the-art facilities to ensure humane care and treatment of excess WH&Bs removed from public lands.
 - b. Develop new techniques for handling, processing and care of captured animals and provide this information to the other states.
6. National adoption program.
- a. Provide coordination for all Bureau adoption efforts.
 - b. Develop promotional material for a national adoption program.
 - c. Establish a centralized dispatch program that gives priority to safe, humane and efficient distribution of WH&Bs throughout the United States.

(Specific action items for adoption are discussed under Population Control and Removals.)

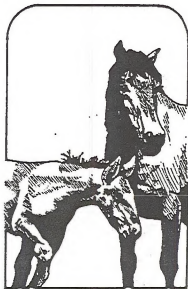
C. Population Management, Removals and Adoptions

1. Provide for management of WH&B populations through a variety of techniques that may be used singly or in combination to ensure habitat is maintained and animals living on the land are in concert with the natural ecosystem and other users of the land. Recommended techniques are:
- a. Selective gathers
 - (1) target specific age groups
 - (2) target specific sex for removal

- b. Fertility control
 - c. Establish HMAs with non-reproductive herds where unadoptable horses can be placed, or return unadoptable horses to other herd areas where populations are below appropriate management levels.
2. Develop policy that allows, with few exceptions, for removal of only adoptable animals.
 3. Each BLM state office should identify at least one area where unadoptable animals can be returned to the land.
 4. In the long-term, balance the rate of population increase with the animal adoption demand (5,000 to 6,000 annually). In the short term, increase adoption demand through increased public affairs efforts to meet the placement needs to reach AMLs.
 5. Implement a strategy for removal and placement of excess animals to reduce the current population to AML. Reach AML within the six-year timeframe as stated in the objectives. The current population is estimated to be 55,000 and the AML approximately 31,000 animals.
 - a. States that are at or near AML have the option of continuing present management. Each of those states, however, will be required to:
 - (1) Implement actions to reduce rate of increase for horses.
 - (2) Remove only adoptable animals.
 - (3) Establish an area or otherwise provide for unadoptables that may be gathered.
 - (4) Increase adoptions within the state to place all horses gathered during the next three years.
 - b. Nevada and Wyoming will use a selective removal strategy with fertility control that will assure that AMLs are reached within a six-year timeframe.

The alternative recommended for Nevada is to remove all one-to-three year olds on a three-year rotational schedule. One-third of all herd units will be gathered each year. In addition, fertility control should be exercised on 50% of all females age four through nine.

This alternative will result in the removal and placement of maximum of 8500 three-year olds during the 3rd year (1996) and with the removal of 2800 at the end of the 7th year.



Advantages of this recommendation include:

- *The basic gene pool of each herd will remain intact.
- *Younger more adoptable animals for private placement.
- *Displacement of older animals minimized.
- *Capability for selection and upgrading herd through sterilization of animals with undesirable qualities, or physical debilitation.
- *Opportunity to reverse or continue contraception.
- *Reduced rates of population growth.

6. Increase the numbers of horses and burros placed through adoption across the United States. The Eastern States Office adoption program will provide for placement of most horses and burros. However, efforts in the Western States must be increased as well.

- a. Nationwide - Implement actions to adopt the following number of horses per year for a three-year period:

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| ESO | 4,000 |
| NM, TX, OK | 1,000 |
| WY, NE | 300 |
| MT, ND, SD | 300 |
| ID | 150 |
| OR, WA | 300 |
| CO | 400 |
| AZ | 300 |
| UT | 300 |
| NV | 500 |
| CA | 1,000 |
| Mid-states facility | 300 |
| Subtotal | 8,850 |

Three reduced-fee adoptions @ 400-500 head:

| | |
|----------|---------------------|
| Subtotal | 1,500 |
| Total | 10,350 WH adoptions |

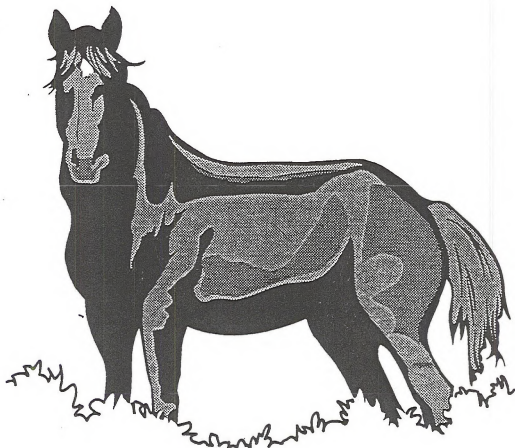
- b. Actions specific for improving the adoption program in the Eastern States include the following:
- (1) Establish one permanent adoption center contract for holding 170 animals (500 adoptions through each permanent center).
 - (2) Maintain a BLM employee at each permanent adoption center.
 - (3) Establish one contract for satellites only (49 satellites average 120 animals per satellite).
 - (4) Conduct in two district offices and the state office, at least 17 satellites each.
- c. New Mexico will continue to develop an aggressive adoption program. Satellite adoptions will be expanded in Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas and other areas of the Midwest.

- d. Adoption in the West will be intensified. Hold up to three reduced-fee adoptions with 400-500 head at strategic locations in the West as needed. WH&B specialists Bureauwide will assist. The logistics of such an adoption would be modeled on the Incident Command System to ensure efficiency.
- e. Because of the public affairs needs of the WH&B program and to foster a Bureauwide vision of the WH&B program, a specialized national public affairs team will be established. This team will be responsible for doing on- the-ground public affairs work for all reduced-fee adoptions and for satellite adoptions when requested by a state or district office. This team will also be responsible for coordinating with volunteers to help publicize the program and educate the public.
- f. Other actions to enhance adoption capability include:
 - (1) Establish a fully automated system for tracking and shipment of animals.
 - (2) Increase public affairs materials and on-the-ground support.
 - (3) Increase support for volunteer assistance.
 - (4) Open a mid-states facility to rest horses being shipped East.
- 7. Increase compliance checks to insure that adopted animals receive proper care.
 - a. Respond to 100% of all mistreatment complaints.
 - b. Inspect a minimum of 5% of all untitled animals each year.
 - c. Involve other interested parties in inspection of untitled animals.
- 8. Specific budget information for implementing the proposed action plan, is presented in Appendix 2.

D. Cooperative Relations and Outreach

- 1. Increase cooperation from all groups interested in the care and management of WH&Bs.
- 2. Develop volunteer programs to assist in the following activities:
 - a. Promote and host adoption events.
 - b. Inspect potential adopter facilities.
 - c. Provide post adoption services to adopters.
 - d. Ensure that a high standard of humane care is maintained.
 - e. Participate in WH&B habitat improvement projects and monitoring.
 - f. Other
- 3. Develop a public affairs plan by 1993 that will provide for development of outreach programs for the following year.
 - a. Improve post adoption protection of animals.
 - b. Inform potential adopters about the full spectrum of the WH & B program.

- c. Provide material for national, state and local events.
 - d. Protection of WH&Bs and enforcement of the Wild Horse and Burro Act.
 - e. Provide quality information about the WH&B program to all members of Congress whose constituents are directly affected by WH&B management activities.
- 4. Increase coordination and cooperation with other federal and state agencies engaged in wild horse and burro management.
 - a. Review existing management agreements and eliminate, revise, or develop agreements as applicable.
 - b. Conduct yearly coordination meetings with other agencies at both national and local levels.
 - c. Provide information exchanges about the WH & B program including, research, management initiatives, public affairs, etc.
 - d. Develop interagency training courses which emphasize an interdisciplinary approach to managing wild horses and burros.
 - 5. To foster a "shared responsibility" attitude, BLM and Forest Service WH&B specialists will assist other states as needed to conduct gathers, adoptions and other activities.
 - 6. Public consultation information is presented in Appendix 3.



**POPULATION SCENARIO FOR WILD HORSES & BURROS
ON PUBLIC LANDS IN NEVADA WITHOUT IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

| Year | No Removals | Removing only 2,500/year |
|------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| | Number | Number |
| 1991 | 35,000 | 35,000 |
| 1992 | 41,000 | 38,350 |
| 1993 | 48,932 | 42,303 |
| 1994 | 58,028 | 49,917 |
| 1995 | 68,943 | 58,902 |
| 1996 | 81,311 | 69,505 |
| 1997 | 96,405 | 82,016 |
| 1998 | 114,434 | 96,779 |
| 1999 | 135,286 | 114,199 |
| 2000 | 160,424 | 134,755 |
| 2001 | 200,000+ | 159,011 |

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MANAGEMENT OF WILD HORSES & BURROS ON PUBLIC LANDS

BUDGET (\$000)

| FISCAL YEAR | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| POPULATION | 56,600 | 52,600 | 51,400 | 48,900 | 43,100 | 41,500 | 37,900 | 31,700 | 30,800 | 28,900 |
| TOTAL ANIMALS REMOVED | 7,600 | 9,100 | 9,800 | 11,000 | 6,400 | 7,400 | 9,600 | 4,400 | 6,200 | 5,800 |
| REMOVAL COST | \$3,400 | \$3,500 | \$3,700 | \$4,100 | \$2,400 | \$2,800 | \$3,600 | \$1,700 | \$2,300 | \$2,200 |
| TOTAL ANIMALS TREATED, FERTILITY CONTROL | 1,500 | 1,600 | 1,700 | 1,900 | 1,300 | 1,500 | 1,700 | 1,100 | 1,200 | 1,000 |
| TREATMENT COST | \$180 | \$190 | \$200 | \$230 | \$160 | \$180 | \$200 | \$130 | \$140 | \$120 |
| TOTAL ANIMALS ADOPTED | 6,300 | 9,300 | 10,000 | 11,300 | 6,800 | 7,700 | 9,900 | 5,800 | 7,000 | 6,230 |
| ADOPTION COST | \$4,000 | \$7,200 | \$7,600 | \$8,500 | \$5,700 | \$6,300 | \$7,700 | \$4,800 | \$5,500 | \$4,900 |
| FACILITY MAINTENANCE/ CONSTRUCTION | \$3,000 | \$1,900 | \$2,800 | \$1,900 | \$3,800 | \$3,300 | \$2,500 | \$4,500 | \$3,400 | \$3,800 |
| PROGRAM MANAGEMENT | \$2,900 | \$2,900 | \$3,200 | \$2,900 | \$3,200 | \$3,200 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$3,100 | \$3,100 |
| HERD MANAGEMENT/ HABITAT MONITORING | \$2,400 | \$2,400 | \$2,400 | \$2,200 | \$4,700 | \$4,200 | \$2,900 | \$5,800 | \$5,800 | \$5,600 |
| TOTAL PROGRAM COST (FIGURES ROUNDED) | \$16,000 | \$18,000 | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | \$20,000 |

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MANAGEMENT OF WILD HORSES & BURROS ON PUBLIC LANDS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Individuals and representatives of the following organizations were consulted and/or made comments during development of the Strategic Plan:

American Horse Protection Association
American Mustang and Burro Association
American Veterinary Institute
Animal Protection Institute
Animal Voice Magazine
Bill Brennan
Bio Blanco Oil Shale Co., Inc.
Bob Arambel
BP Publishing, Inc.
Cheryl Holy
Cheryl Matthews
Chris Jouffas
Colorado Cattlemen's Association
Colorado Department of Corrections
Colorado Horse Rescue
Colorado Horsemen's Council
Colorado Public Lands Council
Colorado State University
Colorado Wool Growers Asso.
Commission for the Preservation
of Wild Horses
Dale Albertson
Denver Post
Denzel Goodwin
E.B. Robinson, Jr.
Ed Howard
Ed Oliver
ENSR Consulting and Engineering
Forst Melick
Fred Burke
Friends of the Mustangs
Gail Vermillion
High County News
Hubert Pepper
Humane Society of the United States
International Society for the
Protection of Mustangs and Burros
Jack E. Haworth
James Suckla
Jim Coleman
Jim Like
John Raftopoulos
Julie M. Brooks
Kay F. Herndon
Lynn Matheson

Mt. Sopris Hereford Ranch
Nadine Marshall
Nancy Bowker
National Cattlemen's Association
National Public Lands Advisory Council
National Wild Horse and Burro
Advisory Board
Nevada Cattlemen's Association
Nevada Congressional Delegation
Nevada Department of Wildlife
Nevada Farm Bureau
Nevada Governor's Advisory Board
on Natural Resources
Nick Theos
Northwest Telco
Parker/Elizabeth Riding Club
Phoenix Horse Rescue
Raymond Snyder
Rob Mahedy
Rockmount Ranchwear Manufacturing CO.
Ross Allen
Roxanne Turnbull
Roy N. "Nate" Patton
Russell Hindmarsh
Scott Warren
Senate Energy Committee/Public
Lands Subcommittee
Sierra Club, Toiyabe Chapter
Society for Range Management
Spring Huston
Stan Whinnery
Steve Davis
The Izaak Walton League of America
Tom Latham
Tom Van Horn
United States Forest Service
University of Nevada, Reno
Vicki Smith
Western Livestock Journal
Whole Horse Institute
Wild Horse Organized Assistance
Wildlife Management Institute
Wright Dickinson
Wyoming State Grazing Board